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Chairman: Mr. Elkhuizen (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Netherlands)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Mselle

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The meeting was called to order at 9.35 a.m.

Agenda item 138: Financing of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (*continued*) (A/58/381 and A/58/447 and Corr.1)

1. **Mr. Paolillo** (Uruguay) said that he welcomed the proposal contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the budget for the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the period from 1 July 2003 to 30 June 2004 (A/58/381) and the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) set out in its report (A/58/447). Uruguay was committed to restoring and maintaining peace in regions experiencing conflict and, since 1952, had participated in more that 20 missions to that end. It had contributed 1,600 troops to the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and, despite the high-risk situations to which those troops had recently been exposed, remained convinced that the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo deserved to live in a climate of peace.

2. He expressed his satisfaction regarding the results-based format of the budget, but felt that there was still ample scope for improvement in that area. When adopting the budget for MONUC, the General Assembly should bear in mind the complex and diverse nature of the Mission and ensure that adequate financing was available for a wide range of activities in such areas as the protection of human rights, gender issues and electoral assistance.

3. Although he acknowledged that the reimbursement process had become more streamlined, he had concerns about the criteria employed in that context. Inexplicable discrepancies meant that Member States had been reimbursed in full for certain items within the regular six-month time frame but had not received reimbursements for other items for two years. He therefore asked what precise criteria were used by the Secretariat.

4. He also expressed concern about the outstanding debts of the Organization to Uruguay on account of its participation in peacekeeping operations in Cambodia. That issue had been raised in the annual report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and the Secretariat had been asked to seek alternative solutions to the problem. A number of troop-contributing countries had been reimbursed for their participation in operations in Cambodia, but the criteria for assigning such reimbursements were unclear. He hoped that the Secretariat was not employing selective criteria which had not been approved by the General Assembly and reiterated his request for a written explanation of the situation.

5. In conclusion, he reaffirmed Uruguay's commitment to peacekeeping operations and noted that the success of those operations depended on ensuring an adequate level of resources which must be carefully administered.

6. **Mr. Halbwachs** (Controller), in response to the comments made by the representative of Uruguay, observed that the Organization was not always able to reimburse Member States in full and on time because it did not always receive their assessed contributions in full and on time. Therefore, the only criteria for determining whether or not reimbursements would be paid was whether or not there was sufficient cash available in the relevant account.

7. With specific reference to MONUC, he said that reimbursements for contingent-owned equipment were paid quarterly on the basis of two criteria, namely, whether there was any available cash and whether the claims submitted during the period in question had been certified. Since Uruguay had submitted its claims after the deadline for the quarter ending September 2003, it would be reimbursed at the end of the forthcoming quarter, in December.

8. Lastly, he said that the reimbursements for peacekeeping operations in Cambodia were being paid in two tranches and that the balance of the total due to Uruguay should have been paid that day.

Agenda item 120: Programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 (A/58/598)

Agenda item 121: Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005 (A/58/598)

Agenda item 161: Financing of the United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (A/58/370, A/58/535, A/58/538 and A/58/598; A/C.5/58/12)

9. **The Chairman** drew attention to a letter dated 27 October 2003 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/58/535)

and to a letter dated 29 October 2003 from the President of the General Assembly addressed to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee (A/C.5/58/12).

10. **Mr. Halbwachs** (Controller), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the budget for the United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire for the period from 13 May 2003 to 30 June 2004 (A/58/370) and the note by the Secretary-General on the budget for the United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (A/58/598), in resolution 1479 (2003), the Security Council had decided to establish the United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (MINUCI) for an initial period of six months. The Secretary-General had proposed a budget of $29,881,700 gross ($28,401,100 net) for the period 13 May 2003 to 30 June 2004, on the assumption that MINUCI would be a peacekeeping operation financed under the peacekeeping scale.

11. Subsequently, in an exchange of letters between the President of the Security Council and the Secretary-General, the former had, on behalf of the Council, expressed the view that MUNUCI should be administered as a special political mission for budgetary purposes. The Security Council had then decided, in resolution 1514 (2003), to extend the mandate of the Mission until 4 February 2004.

12. Consequently, if the General Assembly decided that MINUCI should be funded under the regular budget, additional resources amounting to $13,865,700 gross ($13,414,500 net) would be required for the period 13 May 2003-31 December 2003 under the programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 and resources amounting to $2,343,900 gross ($2,172,400 net) would arise under the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005.

13. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on the proposed budget for the United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire for the period from 13 May 2003 to 30 June 2004 (A/58/538), said that the Committee had recommended that the Secretary-General's estimate of $28.9 million should be approved. With reference to paragraph 15 of the report, he said that it would be for the General Assembly to decide whether or not a special account should be established for MINUCI.

14. **Mr. Wittmann** (United States of America) said that his delegation believed that it was important to finance MINUCI from the proper appropriation and it therefore supported the decision to introduce the questioning of its financing under agenda items 120, 121 and 161. It also endorsed the recommendation of the Security Council that MINUCI should be administered as a special political mission for budgetary and other purposes.

15. In adopting resolution 1479 (2003), the Security Council had decided that the situation in Côte d'Ivoire called for unarmed military liaison officers, whose mandate would be to provide liaison services, to observe and to report. There was no provision for organized military campaigns and no offensive or defensive capability was envisaged. The officers would be deployed in teams of two to ten advisers rather than in formed units, they would be peace facilitators rather than peacekeepers.

16. Therefore, when it became clear that MINUCI was being financed as a peacekeeping mission, the Security Council, which had been under the impression that it would be categorized as a special political mission and would be included in the regular budget, had taken the unusual step of making its views known to the Secretary-General. Resolution 1514 (2003) had underscored that point.

17. His delegation did not object to the involvement of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in planning or administering the Mission. However, it was important that the Committee, in seeking more creative ways to finance support for peace and conflict prevention, should act in accordance with the mandate approved by the Security Council and use that mandate as a key guideline for the creation and management of the Mission. The information contained in A/58/598 regarding the apportionment of costs should be sufficient to enable the Committee to take a decision on an appropriate course of action.

Agenda item 165: Financing of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (A/58/539 and A/58/591)

18. **Ms. Pollard** (Director of the Peacekeeping Financing Division), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the budget for the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in Liberia for the period from 1 August 2003 to 30 June 2004 (A/58/539), said that, in resolution 1509 (2003), the Security Council had decided to establish the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) for an initial period of

12 months. The report contained results-based frameworks for the first budgetary period, which would be refined and rendered more objective in the next report.

19. The budget amounted to $564.6 million, of which $9.7 million represented actual expenditures incurred by UNMIL for the period from 1 August to 30 September 2003 and $554.9 million represented the estimated resource requirements for the period from 1 October 2003 to 20 June 2004. It provided for the phased deployment of 14,785 military contingent personnel, 215 military observers, 1,115 civilian police officers, including 360 formed police personnel, and 1,661 civilian personnel. It also provided for the transfer of equipment from the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi and other missions.

20. The actions to be taken by the General Assembly were set out in section IV of the report.

21. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on the proposed budget for the United Nations Mission in Liberia for the period from 1 August 2003 to 30 June 2004 (A/58/591), said that the Committee had reviewed the estimates submitted by the Secretary-General and made a number of recommendations. It had also made a number of observations on the structure of the Mission, the grading of civilian personnel, and evaluation and coordination issues. He trusted that those observations would be taken into account and that the results of their implementation would be reflected in the next report.

22. Bearing in mind its experience with missions of a similar nature, ACABQ had recommended that the amount proposed by the Secretary-General should be appropriated but had also recommended that the total amount assessed for the period should not exceed $450 million. The Committee would review the question of additional assessments when it examined the estimates for the 2004/05 period.

23. **Mr. Kelapile** (Botswana), speaking on behalf of the African Group, said that he supported the proposed budget for UNMIL. He welcomed the results-based format of the proposed budget, which, in accordance with the mandate of the Mission, addressed the achievement of objectives related to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. He took note of the information provided in paragraph 5 of the report of the Secretary-General regarding the phased deployment of personnel. Given the large and complex nature of UNMIL, he also commended the Secretariat for having completed the budget in only 92 days. Including the information in the budget was useful and indicated a clear target line that should be improved upon and used in assessing future performance.

24. He reaffirmed the usefulness of close collaboration between the United Nations and relevant regional arrangements in the attainment of the common goal, the maintenance of international peace and security. The active involvement of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in the achievement of a peaceful settlement in Liberia served as a positive example in that regard. With reference to paragraphs 7 to 9 of the report of ACABQ (A/58/591), he said that the coordination of efforts and collaboration by all actors were necessary in order to address, in a comprehensive manner, the interlinked nature of the conflicts prevailing in West African countries, including Liberia. The coordination of efforts should not, however, be turned into a cost-cutting measure.

25. Inter-agency cooperation and coordination was also vital, and in that regard he agreed with the observation of the Advisory Committee contained in paragraph 16 of its report. He called for the active involvement of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the process of conceptualizing the humanitarian and human rights component of the Mission and in its overall implementation.

26. There was a need for predictable and adequate resources for the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme, which was very important both for Liberia and for other West African countries experiencing conflict. Commitment to its implementation must be sustained.

27. In view of the elaborate organizational structure of UNMIL, which reflected its large and complex mandate, he welcomed the distinct separation of the various aspects of the mandate into clearly defined components in order to achieve better coordination and implementation. To that end, activities and functions should be properly grouped together according to their similarities.

28. He took note of the external factors reflected under components 1 and 2 and requested UNMIL to make every effort to ensure that the relevant objectives,

which were crucial to its success, were attained. With regard to the peace process (component 4), he welcomed the initial steps taken to establish an Electoral Advisory Unit and expressed the hope that adequate arrangements would be made to ensure that the expected accomplishment of conducting free, fair and credible elections in Liberia in 2005 was achieved. Furthermore, he hoped that planning for the elections would begin well in advance and took the view that due consideration should be given to using United Nations Volunteers for that purpose. He requested that, when Volunteers were selected for the Mission, full account should be taken of expertise already available in the region.

29. Lastly, he expressed his gratitude to all troop-contributing countries and encouraged the Secretariat to work closely and expeditiously with them to ensure that the phased deployment schedules for military and police personnel proceeded as planned. Attention should be paid to the recruitment of qualified civilian personnel from the region and to the involvement of Member States in the region in procurement activities.

30. **Mr. Martini** (Italy), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the acceding countries Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, the associated countries Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey and, in addition, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, said that UNMIL, through its multidisciplinary approach, had a key role to play in the promotion of democratic institutions and a stable environment for civilian life in Liberia. He welcomed the Mission's intention to work in a variety of areas such as institution building, gender policy, child protection and disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation. However, given that the key to successful peacekeeping operations was coordination between all sections of missions, all the sections and units of UNMIL must work together in order to avoid duplication. He fully supported the observations and recommendations of ACABQ concerning the structure of the civilian component of UNMIL and stressed that it was important to review the organizational structure of the Mission with a view to streamlining it.

31. Consideration of the regional dimension of UNMIL operations was of the utmost importance to the European Union and, in that regard, he expected that the Mission would coordinate closely with ECOWAS and the African Union. In order to ensure a system-wide approach to the many subregional issues, UNMIL must also work together with the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), MINUCI and the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau, as well as with the United Nations Office for West Africa. In that connection, he welcomed the meeting between the heads of those missions and offices that had recently taken place in Dakar. He agreed with the comments of ACABQ concerning coordination and shared its observation that a really coordinated approach required the involvement of all concerned United Nations entities in the management of any resource. For that reason, he supported the establishment of a Programme Planning and Assessment Unit within UNMIL. With regard to the financing of the Mission, he concurred with the recommendations of ACABQ.

32. **Mr. Hammerschmidt** (Canada), speaking also on behalf of Australia and New Zealand, said that the establishment of UNMIL was a critical step towards the goal of restoring peace to Liberia and alleviating the extremely difficult humanitarian situation prevailing in that country. UNMIL would also play a vital stabilizing role in a region wracked by a number of successive destructive conflicts.

33. The launching of UNMIL was something of a milestone for the United Nations, given that Liberia was the first nation to host a major peacekeeping mission since the establishment of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea three years previously and that UNMIL was the first major deployment since the implementation of the recommendations of the Report of the Panel on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (the Brahimi Report). The scope and scale of the operation in Liberia would provide Member States with their first opportunity to assess comprehensively the impact of the Brahimi reform process, which was critical to the peace and security responsibilities of the United Nations and to the prospect of peace for so many around the globe. For that reason, he looked forward to a thorough analysis of the UNMIL experience and the performance of the United Nations in supporting it. The General Assembly had requested two separate reviews of the Brahimi reforms, and he assumed that those reviews would rely significantly on the UNMIL experience in drawing their conclusions.

34. The UNMIL deployment represented an improvement on past operations in a number of ways.

Investments in new and expanded capabilities had shown their value in areas such as strategic and operational planning and early information-sharing with troop contributors. The early mobilization of critical start-up resources had been improved by the creation and employment of pre-mandate commitment authority and the strategic deployment stocks and, thanks to the flexible leveraging of ECOWAS, the Standby High-Readiness Brigade, UNAMSIL and the assets and capabilities of numerous Member States prior to start-up, UNMIL had been able to deploy personnel on a solid footing.

35. He commended the Secretariat on the preparation of a well-constructed, comprehensive and comprehensible budget within such tight deadlines, particularly since the many unknowns at mission start-up made budget forecasting difficult at best. To further fine-tune the budget forecast, he would appreciate an update on the progress of deployment into the mission area. The budget reflected a sound results framework that provided the Mission's management with clear guidance for the implementation of resolution 1509 (2003) and should act as an excellent basis for ensuring that resources and energy were applied in a way that supported the Mission's overall objectives. In that connection, he encouraged the Secretariat to continue refining its results-based budgeting techniques.

36. In view of the size and complexity of UNMIL, the resources required for the achievement of its objectives were significant and could be expected to increase over the forthcoming 18 months. For that reason, it was important to set the Mission on the right footing from the start and to focus, wherever possible, on best financial practices. In that respect, he encouraged the Secretariat to draw upon lessons learned from ongoing operations as well as direction from the Fifth Committee in the specific context of UNMIL activities.

37. Since UNMIL was flanked by United Nations operations in Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire, the Organization had an excellent opportunity to optimize the provision of support and service delivery in the region. Collaboration between UNMIL, UNAMSIL and MINUCI should be strengthened so as to optimize the use of the Organization's transportation, communications, equipment and storage resources. As the initial deployment process neared completion and as regional needs evolved, the Secretariat would be expected to identify potential efficiencies.

38. **Mr. Kozaki** (Japan) said that peace and stability in Liberia were important for peace and stability in the West African region and the entire African continent. In that connection, he wished to commend all parties involved in the mediation efforts that had led to the establishment of the Transitional Government in Liberia.

39. He endorsed the recommendations contained in the report of ACABQ (A/58/591); as the report pointed out, full deployment of almost 15,000 troops by the end of March 2004 might be an overly optimistic expectation. He shared the view of ACABQ that the Mission should draw upon the expertise of other United Nations entities and involve them in a coordinated approach towards implementing the mandate rather than translating every aspect of the Security Council mandate into requests for staff. Furthermore, there was a need to review the organizational structure of the Mission paying particular attention to the grade structure.

40. Lastly, he fully supported the recommendation of ACABQ that the total amount assessed for the period 1 August 2003 to 30 June 2004 should not exceed $450 million. There seemed to be room for savings in the unit cost of rations and training travel costs.

The meeting rose at 10.25 a.m.